RESEARCH ARTICLE | SEPTEMBER 12 2023

# The <sup>103</sup>Rh NMR spectroscopy and relaxometry of the rhodium formate paddlewheel complex

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J. Chem. Phys. 159, 104307 (2023) https://doi.org/10.1063/5.0165830





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Cite as: J. Chem. Phys. 159, 104307 (2023); doi: 10.1063/5.0165830 Submitted: 30 June 2023 • Accepted: 15 August 2023 • Published Online: 12 September 2023



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# ABSTRACT

The nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) spectroscopy of spin-1/2 nuclei with low gyromagnetic ratio is challenging due to the low NMR signal strength. Methodology for the rapid acquisition of <sup>103</sup>Rh NMR parameters is demonstrated for the case of the rhodium formate "paddlewheel" complex Rh<sub>2</sub>(HCO<sub>2</sub>)<sub>4</sub>. A scheme is described for enhancing the <sup>103</sup>Rh signal strength by polarization transfer from <sup>1</sup>H nuclei, which also greatly reduces the interference from ringing artifacts, a common hurdle for the direct observation of low- $\gamma$  nuclei. The <sup>103</sup>Rh relaxation time constants  $T_1$  and  $T_2$  are measured within 20 min by using <sup>1</sup>H-detected experiments. The field dependence of the <sup>103</sup>Rh  $T_1$  is measured. The high-field relaxation is dominated by the chemical shift anisotropy mechanism. The <sup>103</sup>Rh shielding anisotropy is found to be very large:  $|\Delta\sigma| = 9900 \pm 540$  ppm. This estimate is compared with density functional theory calculations.

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# I. INTRODUCTION

Rhodium paddlewheel complexes have attracted significant attention due to their unique properties and diverse applications where they have played roles as catalysts and potential anticancer agents.<sup>1–5</sup> These complexes consist of two rhodium atoms bridged by four carboxylate ligands, forming a lantern-like structure, with some resemblance to the paddlewheels of a river boat. A typical example is rhodium formate, Rh<sub>2</sub>(HCO<sub>2</sub>)<sub>4</sub>, see Fig. 1.

Nuclear magnetic resonance (NMR) is a powerful probe of the properties of rhodium complexes. <sup>103</sup>Rh carries the distinction of being one of only 4 (with <sup>19</sup>F, <sup>31</sup>P, and <sup>89</sup>Y) spin-1/2 nuclei with a natural abundance of 100%. Nevertheless, it has been relatively neglected by spectroscopists: <sup>103</sup>Rh is a member of what Mann dubbed "the Cinderella nuclei"<sup>6</sup>—transition metals with spin-1/2 but very low magnetogyric ratio *y*. The NMR of <sup>103</sup>Rh is associated with multiple experimental challenges leading to a relative scarcity of experimental data. However, many of these challenges have been successfully overcome by the creative application of modern NMR methodology, such as heteronuclear multiple-quantum (HMQC) NMR.<sup>7</sup> However, although HMQC experiments allow the rapid acquisition of <sup>103</sup>Rh NMR spectra in suitable cases, it is not possible to estimate <sup>103</sup>Rh spin-lattice and spin-spin relaxation time constants through HMQC experiments. For this purpose, experiments exploiting <sup>103</sup>Rh magnetization are needed.

In this work, we utilize a variant of the PulsePol polarization transfer technique<sup>8-10</sup> to enhance the <sup>103</sup>Rh NMR spectroscopy of the rhodium formate paddlewheel complex in solution. We report the following: (i) NMR methodology for the acquisition of directly detected <sup>103</sup>Rh spectra with effective ringing filtration and (ii) NMR methodology for the rapid measurement of <sup>103</sup>Rh  $T_1$  and  $T_2$  relaxation time constants over a range of magnetic field strengths. We observe a strong field dependence of the <sup>103</sup>Rh  $T_1$ , which is qualitatively consistent with a dominant chemical shift anisotropy (CSA) relaxation mechanism. We estimate the <sup>103</sup>Rh relaxation experiments in solution and from <sup>13</sup>C solid-state NMR.

# II. EXPERIMENTAL

### A. Sample

Experiments were performed on a saturated (~10 mM) solution of rhodium formate  $(Rh_2(HCO_2)_4)$  dissolved in 500  $\mu$ l deuterated



**FIG. 1.** Molecular structure of the rhodium formate paddlewheel complex ligated by solvent tetrahydrofuran (THF) molecules at the axial sites. This work exploits the  ${}^{3}J_{\text{RhH}}$  scalar couplings for polarization transfer between the  ${}^{103}\text{Rh}$  and  ${}^{1}\text{H}$  nuclei.

tetrahydrofuran (THF-d<sub>8</sub>) contained in a Wilmad LPV 5 ml sample tube. The rhodium formate was synthesized from rhodium chloride using a reported procedure<sup>11</sup> and dried extensively under heated vacuum. The resulting rhodium formate solid was green in color and dissolved in THF to produce a green solution.

# **B. Solution NMR**

 $^{1}$ H and  $^{103}$ Rh spectra were acquired at a magnetic field strength of 9.4 T using a standard commercial Bruker 5 mm NMR BBO probe  $(^{1}$ H $/^{2}$ H $/^{109}$ Ag $-^{31}$ P) equipped with a z-gradient with a maximum strength of 50 G cm $^{-1}$ .

Proton resonances are referenced to the absolute frequency 400.143 00 MHz, whereas <sup>103</sup>Rh resonances are referenced to an absolute frequency that is proportional to the protons  $[\Xi(^{103}\text{Rh})]$  = 3.16%] per the most common convention.<sup>12</sup>

Although the probe could be tuned to <sup>103</sup>Rh beyond the manufacturer specifications, it was set to mismatched (overcoupled) conditions to reduce ringdown times.<sup>13-16</sup> The radio frequency amplitudes on the <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>103</sup>Rh channels were both adjusted to give an intentionally matched nutation frequency of  $\omega_{nut}/(2\pi) \simeq 4$  kHz, corresponding to a 90° pulse duration of 62.5  $\mu$ s.

Additional isolation of the rf channels by electronic filters was found to be necessary—without the filters, noise on the <sup>103</sup>Rh channel was significant enough to preclude observation of other nuclei. At the preamplifier output, we installed: a 30 MHz lowpass filter (Chemagnetics) on the <sup>103</sup>Rh channel, a 400 MHz bandpass filter (K & L Microwave) on the <sup>1</sup>H channel, and a 61 MHz bandpass filter (FSY Microwave) on the <sup>2</sup>H lock channel.

To measure relaxation times as a function of the magnetic field, the experiments used rapid sample shuttling from inside the 9.4 T magnet bore to regions of lower field outside the magnet bore.<sup>17</sup> The shuttling was performed using a motorized fast shuttling system based on the design by Kiryutin.<sup>18</sup> The shuttling time was kept constant at 1 s.

The pulse sequences described below use the following elements:

#### 1. Composite pulses

Composite pulses were used to minimize the effects of rf field inhomogeneity and are denoted by shaded black rectangles in the pulse sequence diagrams. All composite pulses are implemented using the symmetrized BB1 composite pulse scheme<sup>19,20</sup> in which a simple pulse  $\beta_{\phi}$  (where  $\beta$  is the flip angle and  $\phi$  is the phase) is replaced by

$$(\beta/2)_{\phi} 180_{\phi+\theta_W} 360_{\phi+3\theta_W} 180_{\phi+\theta_W} (\beta/2)_{\phi}, \tag{1}$$

where  $\theta_W = \arccos(-\beta/(4\pi))$ . For the  $\pi/2$  and  $\pi$  flip angles used in this paper, this corresponds to the following sequences:

$$90_{\phi} \to 45_{\phi} 180_{\phi+97.18} 360_{\phi+291.54} 180_{\phi+97.18} 45_{\phi}, \tag{2}$$

$$180_{\phi} \to 90_{\phi} 180_{\phi+104.48} 360_{\phi+313.43} 180_{\phi+104.48} 90_{\phi}.$$
 (3)

#### 2. DualPol polarization transfer sequence

The transfer of polarization between <sup>103</sup>Rh and <sup>1</sup>H was achieved using the pulse sequence shown in Fig. 2. This consists of repeating PulsePol sequences,<sup>8,9</sup> applied simultaneously to the <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>103</sup>Rh radio frequency channels. The PulsePol sequence consists of six phase-shifted radio frequency pulses and four intervals  $\tau$ , and was originally developed for polarization transfer between electron and nuclear spins in the context of nitrogen-vacancy diamond magnetometry.<sup>8</sup> It has also been shown to be effective for singlet-tomagnetization conversion<sup>9,10</sup> and has been interpreted in terms of symmetry-based recoupling theory.<sup>10</sup> For convenience, we refer to the "dual PulsePol" sequence in Fig. 2 as "DualPol."

DualPol is an unusual example of a solution-state polarization transfer sequence combining (i) multiple-pulse averaging<sup>22,23</sup> and (ii) hard pulses separated by delays. The sequence provides robust polarization transfer even in the strong-coupling regime, where the standard INEPT sequence breaks down.<sup>24–28</sup> That particular feature is not essential for the results described here. However, it is



**FIG. 2.** DualPol pulse sequence used for  ${}^{1}H{-}{}^{103}Rh$  cross polarization, consisting of simultaneous PulsePol sequences<sup>8</sup> on the two channels. Each PulsePol sequence is a repeating sequence of two R-elements. Each R-element has duration  $\tau_R$  and is given by a composite  $180^{\circ}$  pulse<sup>21</sup> with delays of duration  $\tau$  between the pulses. The R-element duration should be short compared to the inverse of the relevant J-couplings. The black rectangles indicate BB1 composite  $\pi$ -pulses [Eq. (3)].

advantageous in other circumstances, as will be discussed in a future publication.

The repeating sequences of PulsePol and DualPol are composed of three-pulse elements of the form  $90_y 180_x 90_x$ , with the pulses separated by intervals  $\tau$ , and variants thereof. Each three-pulse sequence is, therefore, a "windowed" version of a composite  $180^{\circ}$ pulse.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, we call this three-pulse sequence a "R-element," using notation originally introduced in the context of broadband heteronuclear decoupling,<sup>29</sup> and later adapted for symmetry-based recoupling sequences in solid-state NMR<sup>30</sup> and symmetry-based singlet-triplet conversion sequences in solution NMR.<sup>10</sup> In the case of DualPol, there is no special constraint or matching condition on the duration  $\tau_R$  of the R-element, except that it should be much shorter than the period of the relevant J-coupling,  $\tau_R \ll |^3 J_{\rm RhH}|^{-1}$ . Under these conditions, the average Hamiltonian<sup>22</sup> generated by the DualPol sequence, for a heteronuclear two-spin system, has the form

$$\overline{H}^{(1)} \simeq \kappa_{\rm DP} \times 2\pi J_{IS} (I_x S_x + I_y S_y), \tag{4}$$

where the nuclides <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>103</sup>Rh are referred to as *I* and *S*, respectively. The numbering convention for the average Hamiltonian terms starts with 1 for the lowest order approximation, in common with the symmetry-based recoupling literature.<sup>30</sup> The DualPol scaling factor is given, under suitable approximations, by  $\kappa_{DP} \simeq \frac{1}{2}$  in the limit of strong radio frequency pulses. Equation (4) corresponds to an anisotropic Hartmann–Hahn Hamiltonian,<sup>31</sup> indicating that the DualPol sequence exchanges *z*-magnetization components between the *I*-spins and *S*-spins. The theory and performance of the DualPol sequence will be discussed in more depth in a future paper.

In the experiments described here, all DualPol sequences used an R-element duration of  $\tau_R = 5$  ms and a repetition number of n = 10. The total duration of each DualPol sequence was  $T = 2n\tau_R$ = 100 ms.

# 3. <sup>1</sup>H destruction filter

The <sup>1</sup>H destruction filter is shown in Fig. 3. The filter has the net effect of dephasing residual proton transverse and longitudinal magnetizations (which may be generated by accidental excitation and recovery during the decay interval, respectively).

# 4. <sup>1</sup>H z-filter

The z-filter for the selection of longitudinal <sup>1</sup>H magnetization is shown in Fig. 4. This employs a bipolar gradient scheme in order to reduce spectral distortions by eddy currents or residual gradient fields.<sup>32</sup>

#### C. Solid-state NMR

Solid-state CPMAS  $^{13}\mathrm{C}$  NMR was performed using a 4 mm Bruker probe at 14.1 T and ~303 K.

#### **D.** Computational chemistry

Quantum chemical geometry optimization and shielding tensor calculations for the rhodium formate complex axially ligated by solvent THF molecules were performed using the ORCA program package version 5.0.3.<sup>33 103</sup>Rh shielding tensors were computed at the TPSSh/SARC-ZORA-TZVPP level of theory.



**FIG. 3.** Proton destruction filter for the removal of residual proton magnetization. The gradient strengths are given by  $G_1 = 100\%$  and  $G_2 = -61.8\%$  with respect to the maximum gradient strength 50 G cm<sup>-1</sup>. Each gradient has a duration of 2 ms. The black rectangle indicates a BB1 composite  $\pi/2$  pulse [Eq. (2)].



**FIG. 4.** Proton z-filter for the selection of proton z-magnetization using bipolar gradients. The gradient strengths are given by  $G_1 = 40\%$  and  $G_2 = -40\%$  with respect to the maximum gradient strength of 50 G cm<sup>-1</sup>. Each gradient pulse has a duration of 2 ms. The black rectangle indicates a BB1 composite  $\pi$ -pulse [Eq. (3)].

# III. RESULTS

# A. NMR spectra

# 1. Solution-state <sup>1</sup>H spectrum

The rhodium formate <sup>1</sup>H spectrum features a single formate <sup>1</sup>H resonance split into a 1:2:1 triplet by coupling to the pair of magnetically equivalent <sup>103</sup>Rh nuclei (Fig. 5). The three-bond <sup>1</sup>H–<sup>103</sup>Rh J-coupling is estimated to be  $|{}^{3}J_{RhH}| = 4.7 \pm 0.1$  Hz.



FIG. 5.  $^1\text{H}$  spectrum of a  ${\sim}10$  mM solution of rhodium formate in THF-d\_8, acquired at 9.4 T and at 298 K in a single scan. Exponential line broadening (0.75 Hz) was applied.

# 2. Solution-state <sup>103</sup>Rh spectra

The sequence shown in Fig. 6 was used for the acquisition of directly detected <sup>103</sup>Rh spectra, enhanced by polarization transfer from <sup>1</sup>H nuclei. After an initial pair of 90° pulses, used for the suppression of ringing artifacts (see below), the DualPol sequence transfers z-magnetization from the <sup>1</sup>H to the <sup>103</sup>Rh nuclei, exploiting the form of the DualPol average Hamiltonian [Eq. (4)]. The resultant <sup>103</sup>Rh z-magnetization is converted into observable transverse magnetization by a final 90° pulse. The <sup>103</sup>Rh NMR signal is enhanced by a factor of up to  $|\gamma_I/\gamma_S| \sim 31$ , relative to that induced by a single 90° pulse applied to <sup>103</sup>Rh nuclei in thermal equilibrium.

Ringing artifacts are strongly suppressed by a phase-cycled pair of 90° pulses on the proton channel, before the polarization transfer takes place. The signs of the <sup>1</sup>H magnetization and the <sup>103</sup>Rh receiver are simultaneously inverted in successive scans. Since the phases of the ringing are correlated with the phases of the pulses on the <sup>103</sup>Rh channel, the ringing is strongly suppressed in the <sup>103</sup>Rh spectrum. Further suppression of ringing is achieved by additional phase cycling of the PulsePol blocks. The sign of the <sup>103</sup>Rh magnetization is invariant under global phase shifts of the DualPol sequence, while the ringing contribution is phase-correlated and largely cancels out. Similar logic has been used to design excitation schemes for ringing suppression in homonuclear NMR experiments.<sup>34,35</sup>



**FIG. 6.** Pulse sequence for the acquisition of <sup>1</sup>H enhanced <sup>103</sup>Rh spectra. A 16-step phase cycle is used where  $\phi_1 = [-x, x, -x, x]$ ,  $\phi_2 = [x, x, -x, -x, -x]$ ,  $\phi_3 = [x, x, x, x, y, y, y, -x, -x, -x, -x, -y, -y, -y, -y]$  and the receiver  $\phi_{rec} = [x, -x, x, -x, y, -y, -y, -x, x, -x, x, -y, y]$ , all of which combine to suppress ringing artifacts on the <sup>103</sup>Rh channel.



**FIG. 7.** (a) <sup>103</sup>Rh spectrum of a ~10 mM solution of rhodium formate in THF-d<sub>8</sub> scaled 2.5 times, acquired using 128 scans at 9.4 T and at 298 K using the pulse sequence in Fig. 6. (b) <sup>1</sup>H-decoupled <sup>103</sup>Rh spectrum acquired using 128 scans at 9.4 T and at 298 K using the pulse sequence in Fig. 6 with continuous-wave <sup>1</sup>H decoupling during signal acquisition. Acquisition time for each spectrum was 1 h. Exponential line broadening (1 Hz) was applied to each spectrum.

The rhodium formate <sup>103</sup>Rh spectrum features a single <sup>103</sup>Rh resonance split into a 1:4:6:4:1 pentet by couplings to the four equivalent <sup>1</sup>H nuclei on the formate ligands [Fig. 7(a)]. The three-bond <sup>1</sup>H-<sup>103</sup>Rh J-coupling is estimated to be  $|{}^{3}J_{RhH}| = 4.7 \pm 0.1$  Hz, in agreement with the <sup>1</sup>H spectrum. The <sup>103</sup>Rh resonances collapse into a single peak centered at 7516 ppm upon <sup>1</sup>H decoupling [Fig. 7(b)].

The <sup>103</sup>Rh resonances are broadened by the short <sup>103</sup>Rh  $T_2$  (see Fig. 13).

The <sup>103</sup>Rh chemical shift is temperature-dependent (see Fig. 8). The temperature-dependence of the <sup>103</sup>Rh chemical shift is approximately linear over the relevant temperature range, with a gradient of  $\sim$ 1.48 ppm K<sup>-1</sup>. This is in general agreement with observations on similar Rh complexes.<sup>7,12</sup>

# 3. Solid-state <sup>13</sup>C NMR

The chemical shift anisotropy (CSA) of the formate <sup>13</sup>C nuclei was estimated by magic-angle-spinning NMR experiments on rhodium formate solid (Fig. 9).

The estimated eigenvalues of the traceless, symmetric (rank-2) part of the shielding tensor are as follows:  $\sigma_{xx}^{(2)} = 65.1$  ppm,  $\sigma_{yy}^{(2)} = 5.5$  ppm, and  $\sigma_{zz}^{(2)} = -70.7$  ppm. This corresponds to the following Frobenius norm of the rank-2<sup>13</sup>C shielding tensor:

$$\|\boldsymbol{\sigma}^{(2)}\|({}^{13}C) = \{(\sigma_{xx}^{(2)})^2 + (\sigma_{yy}^{(2)})^2 + (\sigma_{zz}^{(2)})^2\}^{1/2} = 96.3 \pm 1.0 \text{ ppm.}$$
(5)

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**FIG. 8.** <sup>103</sup>Rh chemical shift of rhodium formate dissolved in THF-d<sub>8</sub> at 9.4 T, as a function of temperature. The chemical shifts are referenced to  $\Xi$ (<sup>103</sup>Rh) = 3.16%.



FIG. 9. Rhodium formate  $^{13}C\{^{1}H\}$  solid-state CPMAS $^{36}$  NMR spectrum obtained at a spinning frequency of 4 kHz acquired using 2048 scans at 14.1 T and at 303 K. The chemical shift was referenced to admantane. The contact time was 160  $\mu$ s. The recycle delay was 3 s.  $\sim$ 150 mg of sample was used. Further details of the pulse sequence are provided in the supplementary material.

# **B.** Relaxation times

# 1. <sup>1</sup>H-detected <sup>103</sup>Rh T<sub>1</sub>

 $^{103}$  Rh  $T_1$  relaxation time constants were measured indirectly through  $^1{\rm H}$  NMR signals using the sequence shown in Fig. 10. DualPol is used to transfer z-magnetization from the  $^1{\rm H}$  nuclei to the  $^{103}$  Rh nuclei and allowed to relax toward equilibrium during the relaxation interval  $\tau_{\rm relax}$ . For field-dependent relaxation measurements, the sample is shuttled to a region of lower magnetic field during this interval, and back again. A proton destruction filter is applied to eliminate any residual proton magnetization, such as that generated during  $\tau_{\rm relax}$  through longitudinal relaxation toward equilibrium. Remaining  $^{103}$  Rh z-magnetization, selected for by the two 90° pulses, is now transferred back to  $^1{\rm H}$  z-magnetization by a second DualPol block and is selected for by a proton z-filter. A final  $^1{\rm H}$  90° pulse generates observable  $^1{\rm H}$  transverse magnetization. The sequence is repeated with variation of  $\tau_{\rm relax}$  in order to follow the equilibration of longitudinal  $^{103}{\rm Rh}$  magnetization.



**FIG. 10.** Sequence used for the indirect measurement of rhodium T<sub>1</sub> through <sup>1</sup>H NMR signals. Phase cycles are given by  $\phi_1 = [x, x, -x, -x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_3 = [x, x, x, x, y, y, y, y, -x, -x, -x, -y, -y, -y, -y]$  and the receiver  $\phi_{rec} = [x, -x, -x, x, y, -y, -y, -y, -y, -y, -y]$  and the receiver thing of the sample to low field, and back again, during the interval  $\tau_{relax}$ , is indicated.

The trajectory of indirectly detected  $^{103}$  Rh z-magnetization in a field of 9.4 T is shown in Fig. 11(a). The trajectory fits well to a single-exponential decay with time constant  $T_1(^{103}$  Rh) = 0.483  $\pm$  0.002 s. A trajectory in the low magnetic field of 1 mT is shown in Fig. 11(b). This was produced by shuttling the sample to low magnetic field during the interval  $\tau_{\rm relax}$ . The relaxation process is much slower in low field, with a time constant of  $T_1(^{103}$  Rh) = 28.2  $\pm$  1.2 s. The rhodium  $T_1^{-1}$  increases approximately quadratically with

The rhodium  $T_1^{-1}$  increases approximately quadratically with the magnetic field strength *B*, as shown in Fig. 11(c). The fielddependent relaxation rate constant is a reasonable fit to the quadratic function  $T_1^{-1}(B) = T_1^{-1}(0) + aB^2$ , where  $T_1^{-1}(0) = 0.065 \pm 0.04 \text{ s}^{-1}$ and  $a = 0.023 \pm 0.001 \text{ s}^{-1} \text{ T}^{-2}$ .

# 2. <sup>1</sup>H-detected <sup>103</sup>Rh T<sub>2</sub>

The sequence shown in Fig. 12 was used to measure the  $^{103}$ Rh spin-spin relaxation time constant  $T_2$  in high magnetic field.

Conversion of <sup>1</sup>H z-polarization into <sup>103</sup>Rh z-polarization is achieved via DualPol. <sup>103</sup>Rh transverse magnetization is generated by a 90° pulse and allowed to decay during the subsequent spin echo of duration  $\tau_{echo}$ . The ensuing 90° <sup>103</sup>Rh pulse returns the remaining transverse <sup>103</sup>Rh magnetization back to longitudinal <sup>103</sup>Rh polarization. A <sup>1</sup>H destruction filter destroys any residual <sup>1</sup>H magnetization before another DualPol cross-polarization block transfers <sup>103</sup>Rh z-magnetization back to <sup>1</sup>H z-magnetization. The <sup>1</sup>H z-filter selects for <sup>1</sup>H z-magnetization before the <sup>1</sup>H signal is induced by the final 90° <sup>1</sup>H pulse. The pulse sequence is repeated varying the echo delay  $\tau_{echo}$  in order to follow the decay of <sup>103</sup>Rh transverse magnetization.

The trajectory of indirectly detected <sup>103</sup>Rh transverse magnetization in a field of 9.4 T is shown in Fig. 13. The trajectory fits well to a single-exponential decay with time constant  $T_2(^{103}\text{Rh})$ = 0.181 ± 0.001 s. Note that the measured value of  $T_2$  is much smaller than  $T_1$  under the same conditions.

# 3. 13C inversion-recovery

As discussed below, the rotational correlation time  $\tau_c$  of the rhodium formate complex may be estimated by a study of the <sup>13</sup>C longitudinal relaxation. These data were obtained by an indirect detection method exploiting the scalar-coupled formate protons, as

180<sub>x</sub>

۱H

<sup>103</sup>Rh

PulsePo

Pulsel

90<sub>d</sub>

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90<sub>¢2</sub>

90<sub>d</sub>



FIG. 11. (a) Decay curve for <sup>103</sup>Rh longitudinal magnetization at a field of 9.4 T, obtained using the pulse sequence in Fig. 10, but without shuttling the sample to low field. The data were acquired in ~20 min. The integrals are normalized against the <sup>1</sup>H spectrum obtained by a single <sup>1</sup>H 90° pulse applied to a system in thermal equilibrium at 9.4 T. The data fit well to an exponential decay with time constant  $T_1 = 0.483 \pm 0.002$  s. (b) Decay curve for <sup>103</sup>Rh longitudinal magnetization at a field of 1 mT, obtained using the pulse sequence in Fig. 10, including the shuttling of the sample to low field. The data fit well to an exponential decay with time constant  $T_1 = 28.2 \pm 1.2$  s. (c) <sup>103</sup>Rh relaxation rate constant  $T_1^{-1}$  as a function of magnetic field strength. The dashed line shows the quadratic function  $T_1^{-1}(B) = T_1^{-1}(0) + aB^2$ , where  $T_1^{-1}(0) = 0.065 \pm 0.038 \text{ s}^{-1}$ and  $a = 0.023 \pm 0.001 \text{ s}^{-1} \text{ T}$ 

described in the supplementary material. The inversion-recovery data fits well to a single-exponential recovery with a time constant of  $2.64 \pm 0.13$  s for a solution in THF-d<sub>8</sub>, in a magnetic field of 9.4 T. However, as described below, the inversion-recovery curve for the



on protons. Phase cycles are given by  $\phi_1 = [x, x, -x, -x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_1 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_1 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_1 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_1 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_1 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_1 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_1 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_1 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_1 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_1 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_1 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_1 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_1 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_1 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_1 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_1 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_1 = [-x, x, -x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x, x], \phi_2 = [-x, x], \phi_2 = [-x,$  $\phi_3 = \begin{bmatrix} x, x, x, x, y, y, y, y, -x, -x, -x, -x, -y, -y, -y, -y \end{bmatrix} \text{ and the receiver } \phi_{\text{rec}}$ = [x, -x, -x, x, y, -y, -y, y, -x, x, x, -x, -y, y, y, -y]. The black rectangle indicates



FIG. 13. Decay curve for  $^{103}\mathrm{Rh}$  transverse magnetization at a field of 9.4 T, obtained using the pulse sequence in Fig. 12. The data fit well to an exponential decay with time constant  $T_2 = 0.181 \pm 0.001$  s. The integrals are normalized against the <sup>1</sup>H spectrum obtained by a single <sup>1</sup>H 90° pulse applied to a system in thermal equilibrium at 9.4 T.

<sup>13</sup>C magnetization is best analyzed using a bi-exponential relaxation model.

#### **IV. DISCUSSION**

As shown in Fig. 11(c), the <sup>103</sup>Rh relaxation rate constant  $T_1^{-1}$ has a quadratic dependence on magnetic field B, with an additional zero-field contribution of  $T_1^{-1}(0) = 0.0653 \pm 0.0383 \text{ s}^{-1}$ . The quadratic field dependence is consistent with a dominant chemical shift anisotropy (CSA) relaxation mechanism, as is commonly observed for the <sup>103</sup>Rh NMR of rhodium complexes.

It is difficult to estimate the <sup>103</sup>Rh chemical shift anisotropy by solid-state NMR. The small magnetogyric ratio of <sup>103</sup>Rh and the very large CSA value make solid-state <sup>103</sup>Rh NMR very difficult. Our attempts to use the PROSPR method<sup>38</sup> to observe the <sup>103</sup>Rh spectrum indirectly in the solid state, by saturation transfer to the <sup>1</sup>H nuclei, were also unsuccessful. This is likely due to the very small dipole-dipole couplings between <sup>1</sup>H and <sup>103</sup>Rh nuclei in this

complex, which greatly inhibits dipolar-mediated polarization transfer in the solid state.

The symmetry of the complex indicates that the <sup>103</sup>Rh CSA tensors should have uniaxial symmetry ( $\eta = 0$ ) with their unique principal axis along the Rh–Rh bond. This property is assumed in the following discussion.

Although the <sup>103</sup>Rh CSA may not be measured directly, it is possible to estimate it by a combination of field-dependent <sup>103</sup>Rh and <sup>13</sup>C  $T_1$  measurements. The compact cage structure of the rhodium formate complex (Fig. 1) suggests that, to a good approximation, the complex tumbles in solution as a near-rigid body, with a common rotational correlation time  $\tau_c$  for all spin interactions. This approximation allows a correlation time estimate from <sup>13</sup>C NMR to be applied in the context of <sup>103</sup>Rh NMR.

A <sup>13</sup>C nucleus of rhodium formate experiences two strong anisotropic interactions: the <sup>13</sup>C-<sup>1</sup>H dipole-dipole coupling with the directly bonded hydrogen nucleus and the <sup>13</sup>C chemical shift anisotropy. For point nuclei (i.e., ignoring the spatial spread of the nuclear wavefunctions), the <sup>13</sup>C-<sup>1</sup>H dipole-dipole coupling constant is given by  $b_{CH} = -(\mu_0/4\pi)\hbar\gamma_C\gamma_H r_{CH}^{-3}$ , where  $r_{CH}$  is the <sup>13</sup>C-<sup>1</sup>H internuclear distance.<sup>39</sup> Quantum chemical calculations<sup>33</sup> (see the supplementary material) predict an internuclear <sup>13</sup>C-<sup>1</sup>H distance of 1.097 Å, corresponding to a dipole-dipole coupling constant of  $b_{CH} = -2\pi \times 22.8$  kHz. However, solid-state NMR studies have shown that the true dipole-dipole coupling is weakened by the angular spread of the <sup>1</sup>H wavefunctions, associated with the zero-point librational motion of the C-H bonds.<sup>40</sup> In the calculations below, we, therefore, assume a <sup>13</sup>C-<sup>1</sup>H dipole-dipole coupling constant of  $b_{CH} = -2\pi \times (20.4 \pm 0.5)$  kHz.

For isolated <sup>13</sup>C-<sup>1</sup>H spin systems in the extreme narrowing approximation (fast tumbling), the theoretical recovery of <sup>13</sup>C longitudinal magnetization  $M_z(t)$  after perturbation from equilibrium at time t = 0 is expected to follow the biexponential curve:

$$M_{z}(t) = M_{z}^{\text{eq}} + \left(M_{z}(0) - M_{z}^{\text{eq}}\right) \frac{1}{2} \left(\exp\left\{-\left(\frac{1}{2}b_{CH}^{2} + \frac{1}{5}\omega_{\text{CSA}}^{2}\right)\tau_{c}\right\} + \exp\left\{-\left(\frac{3}{2}b_{CH}^{2} + \frac{1}{5}\omega_{\text{CSA}}^{2}\right)\tau_{c}\right\}\right),$$
(6)

where  $M_z^{\text{eq}}$  is the thermal equilibrium <sup>13</sup>C magnetization, and  $\omega_{\text{CSA}}$  is defined as follows:

$$\omega_{\rm CSA} = -\gamma_C B_0 \|\boldsymbol{\sigma}^{(2)}\|,\tag{7}$$

where  $\|\sigma^{(2)}\|$  is the norm of the <sup>13</sup>C shielding tensor, as defined in Eq. (5). The biexponential form of Eq. (6) is due to <sup>1</sup>H–<sup>13</sup>C cross-relaxation during the magnetization recovery.<sup>41–43</sup>

In a magnetic field of 9.4 T, the <sup>13</sup>C CSA, as estimated by <sup>13</sup>C solid-state NMR (Sec. III A 3), corresponds to an interaction strength of  $\omega_{\text{CSA}} \simeq 2\pi \times (9.7 \pm 0.1)$  kHz. By fitting the experimental <sup>13</sup>C inversion-recovery trajectory to an equation of the form in Eq. (6), we obtain the following estimate of the rotational correlation time for the rhodium formate paddlewheel complex in THF-d<sub>8</sub> solution at 298 K:  $\tau_c \simeq 24.5 \pm 1.5$  ps. The <sup>103</sup>Rh relaxation may now be analyzed using the estimate of  $\tau_c$  from the <sup>13</sup>C data. As shown in Fig. 11, the <sup>103</sup>Rh T<sub>1</sub><sup>-1</sup> relaxation rate constant is well-described by the function  $T_1^{-1}(B) = T_1^{-1}(0) + aB^2$ , with the field-independent term  $T_1^{-1}(0) = 0.065 \pm 0.038 \, \text{s}^{-1}$  and the quadratic coefficient  $a = 0.023 \pm 0.001 \, \text{s}^{-1} \, \text{T}^{-2}$ .

The quadratic field-dependent term may be ascribed to the CSA mechanism. In the extreme narrowing approximation (fast tumbling), the CSA contribution to the  $T_1^{-1}$  relaxation rate constant for <sup>103</sup>Rh is given by<sup>43</sup>

$$\left(T_{1}\left(^{103}\text{Rh}\right)\right)_{\text{CSA}}^{-1} = \frac{2}{15}B_{0}^{2}\gamma_{\text{Rh}}^{2}\Delta\sigma^{2}\tau_{c},$$
 (8)

where the shielding anisotropy  $\Delta \sigma$  is defined as follows:<sup>43</sup>

$$\Delta \sigma = \frac{3}{2} (\sigma_{ZZ} - \sigma_{\rm iso}) = -\frac{3}{2} \delta^{\rm aniso}.$$
 (9)

Equation (8) implies that the quadratic field-dependent coefficient *a* for the  ${}^{103}$ Rh  $T_1^{-1}$  relaxation rate constant is given by

$$a = \frac{2}{15} \gamma_{\rm Rh}^2 \Delta \sigma^2 \tau_c. \tag{10}$$

The experimental estimate of the quadratic coefficient  $a = 0.023 \pm 0.001 \text{ s}^{-1} \text{ T}^{-2}$  may be combined with the correlation time estimate  $\tau_c \simeq 24.5 \pm 1.5$  ps to obtain the following experimental estimate of the <sup>103</sup>Rh shielding anisotropy:  $|\Delta\sigma| = 9900 \pm 540$  ppm.

This is a very large number. Although prior estimates of the <sup>103</sup>Rh CSA are scarce in the literature, CSA values for heavy spin-1/2 nuclei are sometimes of a similar magnitude,<sup>44–53</sup> with closely related platinum (II) compounds displaying <sup>195</sup>Pt CSA values on the order of 10 000 ppm.<sup>44,46,51,53</sup> To our knowledge, the only other measurements of <sup>103</sup>Rh CSAs, in very different Rh(III) compounds, were on the order of ~500–1500 ppm.<sup>54,55</sup> This dramatic range is also typical<sup>47,48,52</sup> for heavy spin-1/2 nuclei. Using ORCA,<sup>33,56,57</sup> <sup>103</sup>Rh shielding tensors were computed

Using ORCA,<sup>35,56,57</sup> <sup>103</sup>Rh shielding tensors were computed at the TPSSh/SARC-ZORA-TZVPP level of theory using implicit solvation (CPCM<sup>58,59</sup> for THF), the zeroth-order regular approximation (ZORA)<sup>60,61</sup> for the inclusion of relativistic effects, Gauge-Independent Atomic Orbitals (GIAOs), the Resolution of Identity (RI) approximation,<sup>57</sup> and the tau-dependent correction as suggested by Dobson<sup>62–64</sup> (see the supplementary material). The result is summarized in Table I.

The calculated CSA is somewhat smaller than the experimental estimate. Underestimation of CSAs calculated using the ZORA method has been reported for other heavy spin-1/2 nuclei,<sup>65–67</sup> where better agreement might be obtained with higher order fourcomponent relativistic calculations<sup>66</sup> or by accounting for the relativistic breakdown of the relationship between spin-rotation and the paramagnetic contribution to the anisotropy.<sup>67</sup>

The origin of the zero-field contribution  $T_1^{-1}(0)$  to the <sup>103</sup>Rh relaxation rate constant is currently unknown. As discussed in the supplementary material, the <sup>103</sup>Rh-<sup>103</sup>Rh and <sup>103</sup>Rh-<sup>1</sup>H

**TABLE I.** Estimates of the <sup>103</sup>Rh shielding tensor anisotropy  $\Delta\sigma$  of Rh formate, defined in Eq. (9). The computational estimate is given by quantum chemical calculation using ORCA.<sup>33</sup> The experimental estimate is from the analysis of field-dependent <sup>103</sup>Rh relaxation in solution, as described in this paper.

Method	$ \Delta\sigma $ (ppm)	
Calculated	7070	
Experimental estimate	9900 ± 540	

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dipole-dipole couplings are much too weak to account for this term. In the literature, the low-field relaxation of heavy spin-1/2 nuclei is often<sup>6,68-70</sup> attributed to a spin-rotation<sup>71</sup> mechanism. However, to our knowledge, this conclusion has not been supported by any theoretical or computational studies.

The experimental estimate of the <sup>103</sup>Rh  $T_2$  is much shorter than the estimate of  $T_1$  under the same conditions ( $T_2 = 0.181 \pm 0.001$  s as against  $T_1 = 0.483 \pm 0.002$  s, in a field of 9.4 T. We tentatively attribute the short  $T_2$  value to the modulation of the isotropic chemical shift by ligand exchange at the axial positions. Other decoherence mechanisms, such as diffusion in the presence of inhomogeneous magnetic fields, are expected to be too weak to account for the observed  $T_2$  value in this case.

In conclusion, this paper has demonstrated methodology for the indirect estimation of <sup>103</sup>Rh  $T_1$  and  $T_2$  values by magnetization transfer to and from <sup>1</sup>H nuclei using the DualPol pulse sequence. Field-dependent <sup>103</sup>Rh  $T_1$  measurements indicate a very large chemical shift anisotropy for the <sup>103</sup>Rh sites in the rhodium formate paddlewheel complex. The field-independent contribution to the <sup>103</sup>Rh relaxation rate constant is not fully understood at the current time.

A limitation of the methodology described here is the prerequisite of a spin system with direct scalar couplings between  $^{103}$  Rh nuclei and a proton, which is not present in all rhodium complexes. This limitation may be addressed via the use of a relay nucleus, such as  $^{13}$ C at natural abundance. $^{7,72-74}$ 

# SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

The supplementary material includes the <sup>13</sup>C relaxation data, experimental parameters for the solid-state <sup>13</sup>C spectrum, and details of the DFT calculations in ORCA.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We acknowledge funding from the European Research Council (Grant No. 786707-FunMagResBeacons) and EPSRC-UK (Grant Nos. EP/P009980/1, EP/P030491/1, and EP/V055593/1). M.L. acknowledges financial support by the Max-Planck-Gesellschaft and the Max-Planck-Institut für Kohlenforschung. We thank Alexander A. Auer for advice on quantum chemical calculations. We thank Professor Brian E. Mann for advice and historical insights on rhodium NMR. We thank Alexey Kiryutin for sharing his designs for the sample shuttle.

# AUTHOR DECLARATIONS

# **Conflict of Interest**

The authors have no conflicts to disclose.

#### Author Contributions

Harry Harbor-Collins: Conceptualization (equal); Data curation (equal); Formal analysis (equal); Investigation (equal); Methodology (equal); Software (equal); Validation (equal); Visualization

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#### DATA AVAILABILITY

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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